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# Pressure for new US arms plan

## Administration mulling over interim agreement but may need more time to draft coherent plan

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Washington

Reagan administration officials are apparently thinking of making a new, interim arms control proposal. But it is not clear whether they have done their homework well enough to make a thoroughly prepared, argued-out proposal anytime soon.

West European leaders have been urging the administration to offer such a proposal in order to break the stalemate in the Geneva talks between the United States and the Soviet Union on medium-range nuclear missiles.

But experts say that to make such a proposal would mean overcoming serious divisions within the administration, involving, in particular, the Defense Department on the one hand and the State Department on the other.

Some West European analysts are urging the administration to get on with a new proposal before the current round of talks in Geneva ends on March 28. In this way, they say, the administration would be able to undercut West German street demonstrations as well as an expected Soviet propaganda drive aimed at on Western Europe.

The Washington Post Tuesday quoted a White House official as saying that it was "conceivable" that a new proposal, if approved by President Reagan, could be ready for submission to the Soviets before the March 28 break. But specialists doubt whether such a complex issue could be so swiftly handled.

Meanwhile, the pressure on the administration to introduce a new proposal is coming not only from Western Europe but also from some members of Congress. In a breakfast meeting with reporters on Tuesday, Sen. Charles H. Percy (R) of Illinois, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said it was time for both superpowers to "cool the rhetoric" and move ahead on arms control. Senator Percy also said it was time for the US to make a new proposal.

Percy suggested President Reagan send Secretary of State George Shultz and his deputy, Kenneth Dam, who has been overseeing the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, to Geneva to provide new momentum to the talks there. He added that Paul Nitze, the chief American negotiator in Geneva, ought to be given more flexibility.

The senator attributed the stalemate in the arms control talks to officials in the National Security Council, the Defense Department, and "perhaps in the State Department," who, he said, "don't want any kind of an agreement."

Although Percy declined to give the names of the officials he accused of "stonewalling" on arms control, reporters at the breakfast meeting assumed he was referring in particular to Richard Perle, the assistant secretary of defense for international security policy. Mr. Perle has wielded enormous influence in the administration's interagency debates on arms control.

Perle is widely credited with having been the most influential official when it came to formulating President Reagan's "zero option" proposal of November 1981, which calls for the Soviets to dismantle all of their medium-range SS-20 missiles. In return, the US would agree not to deploy 572 Pershing II and cruise missiles in Western Europe.

Dimitri K. Simes, a specialist on Soviet and European affairs at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, argues that Perle has managed to block serious analysis within the administration of alternatives to the zero option. Perle could not immediately be reached for comment.

According to Mr. Simes, the administration would be in no position to present a full-blown, new proposal to the Soviets at this moment, but only the "skeleton" of a new proposal.